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Promotion and protection of human rights: comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

Letter dated 20 September 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to submit herewith the report, entitled "Vienna + 25: building trust — making human rights a reality for all", of the international conference on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the World Conference on Human Rights (see annex).*

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 74 (d).

(*Signed*) Jan **Kickert**
Permanent Representative

* The annex is being circulated in the language of submission only.

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Annex to the letter dated 20 September 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Vienna+25
Building Trust — Making Human Rights a Reality for All

International Conference on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna City Hall, 22–23 May 2018)

Outcome document

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (VDPA) adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights (14 to 25 June 1993), the Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, in cooperation with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the City of Vienna and the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights (BIM), organized a high level expert conference in Vienna. The event was co-funded by the Austrian Development Agency.

This document reflects the main messages of the discussions. It has been compiled by the Austrian hosts and includes the recommendations elaborated by the Chairs and Rapporteurs of the Working Groups. The conference programme is annexed. A publication with all conference documents is in preparation and will be published later this year.

INTRODUCTION

The expert conference gathered human rights stakeholders from all world regions, high level representatives of the UN, including special procedures mandate holders and members of treaty bodies, human rights defenders and independent human rights experts from civil society and academia, regional, subregional and national human rights institutions as well as representatives from the local level.

The purpose of the conference was to collect experts' perspectives on global trends, such as digitalization, demographic changes, urbanisation and climate change, and their impact on the human rights agenda of the next decades. The experts developed practical recommendations to encourage states and other stakeholders to pursue further legal, institutional and practical improvements to human rights protection, both domestically and internationally. The conference aimed at making a contribution to a future-oriented discourse on the relevance of human rights, and in doing so, strengthening the voice of human rights activists and defenders who identified the most pressing challenges that human rights are facing right now and highlighted good practices to tackle them.

The conference was opened by Austrian Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs Karin Kneissl, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein and the Mayor of Vienna Michael Häupl as the conference host. The High Level Opening on "Emerging human rights challenges — perspectives from the ground" was chaired by the Director of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency Michael O'Flaherty, and included UNODC Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking Nadia Murad, as well as Nigerian human rights lawyer Hauwa Ibrahim, Argentinian lawyer and women's rights activist Susana Chiarotti, and the Austrian data protection activist Max Schrems. In their

addresses, they discussed burning human rights challenges such as armed conflict and internal displacement, violent extremism, women's rights and gender equality, data protection and privacy as well as the work on the local level including the role of cities and urban development. They noted that in spite of progress in some areas of human rights, there had been retrogression in other areas in recent years and challenges persisted. The human rights activists called upon the international community to stand by their achievements and defend human rights in the face of mistrust, indifference, persisting conflict and increasing isolationism.

The ensuing discussions at expert level were conducted in two Working Groups focusing on the topics "Human Rights and Security" and "Promotion of Equality in our Societies". Each Working Group was composed of approximately 45 experts. Working Group 1 on "Human Rights and Security" was chaired by Agnes Callamard, UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions. Working Group 2 on "Promotion of Equality in our Societies" was chaired by Manfred Nowak, Director of the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights. In preparation of the conference, participants had received thematic outline papers for the two Working Groups as a basis for discussion. The thematic outline papers were authored by Gerrit Zach (Working Group 1) and Karin Lukas (Working Group 2), both Senior Researchers at the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights. During the Working Group sessions, the experts shared experiences from their respective fields of expertise and jointly formulated a set of recommendations addressed to relevant stakeholders. Vitit Muntarbhorn, Professor of Law at Chulalongkorn University Bangkok, and Heike Alefsen, Senior Human Rights Adviser at the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh, served as Rapporteurs and presented the recommendations of their respective Working Groups to the plenary during the closing session of the conference.

FOLLOW-UP

The conference was closed by Austrian Foreign Minister Karin Kneissl, after a High Level Concluding Panel on "The way forward — views of key institutional stakeholders". Chaired by Christian Strohal, Special Representative for the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights 1993, the panel gathered institutional stakeholders such as Fabrizio Hochschild, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination, Hilal Elver, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Bandana Rana, member of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Diego García-Sayán, UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, and Gauri van Gulik, Amnesty International Regional Director for Europe. In their discussion, they recognised the progress made since the adoption of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, including in institutional advances, accountability, global awareness for human rights and the strength of the global human rights movement today. In response to emerging challenges they highlighted the need to build new alliances, to show contextual flexibility and to create participatory and diverse movements. They encouraged spreading the message that human rights serve as a source of trust and a means to bring humanity together by transferring global action to the local level and ensuring better and more positive communication about human rights.

Participating experts agreed that the conference had generated renewed momentum to defend human rights worldwide. There was broad support for joining efforts to translate this momentum into appropriate follow-up and concrete activities by all participants. In her concluding remarks, Austrian Foreign Minister Karin Kneissl underlined Austria's commitment to bringing the recommendations from the conference to the attention of the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly of the UN and encouraged participants to pursue them in their respective fields of

activity. The conference organizers will publish a compilation of all conference documents to facilitate the dissemination of the results.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations emerged from the discussions among participating experts regarding the two major themes of the conference:

WORKING GROUP I: HUMAN RIGHTS AND SECURITY

Overarching recommendations:

Security, human rights, dignity, equality, democracy, peace and sustainable development are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

This linkage calls for a holistic and systemic understanding of the notion of security and its multifaceted nature, including the interrelationship between different actors, taking into account the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While state security and national security are often invoked at the interface with human rights, there are other dimensions of security to be borne in mind, including international security, human security, social security, cybersecurity, food security and security from the state. Security is thus interlinked with the whole range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Human rights must inform the notion of security, particularly to set the parameters of what is permissible internationally.

While some human rights can be subject to limitations based on national security, public safety and public order, the latter need to fulfil the principles of legality, necessity, proportionality, non-discrimination and human rights universality. Moreover, while insecurity is generally perceived as based on threats, great care is needed since these threats might be actual, potential, or merely fictitious and used as a pretext to erode human rights. Thus, more effort should be made to prevent threat(s) and inform society about fictitious stereotypes.

This requires a discussion based on facts and evidence-based research, which needs to be inclusive, participatory and grounded at the local level, particularly to reflect the realities of those affected by the claims of security policies. This demands a proactive approach to reframe the security narrative which is sensitive to the needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups, particularly promoting and involving a strong and vibrant civil society.

Specific Recommendations:

1. Recommendations to States

Laws and policies

1. In their law and policy making, states should base themselves on a broad understanding of security, including social factors, inequality and marginalisation.

2. Ensure space for civil society to operate freely and to contribute expertise to the policy process. This includes an adequate legal framework to operate, freedom of expression for all, participatory procedures, and access to potential victims of human rights violations, while ensuring that government representatives, policy makers and relevant stakeholders engage in dialogue with citizens and those who have expertise to contribute.

3. Review counter-terrorism laws and national security related policies, including those related to cybersecurity, so as to ensure their compliance with international human rights standards.

4. Promulgate laws to implement international human rights standards, including those regarding action to counter public incitement to hatred, discrimination and violence, in full respect of freedom of expression standards online and offline.

5. Adopt a systematic approach to the relationship between security and human rights, bearing in mind that while some human rights are non-derogable, others are of a derogable nature but the limitations must be in accordance with the principles of legality, necessity, proportionality and non-discrimination.

6. Carry out an upstream assessment of all security-related legislative proposals that engage with data interoperability regarding their impact on fundamental rights, which has to be underpinned by the principles of legality, necessity, proportionality and non-discrimination.

Programmes and practices

7. Underline the need to protect the rights of vulnerable groups and the rights of women effectively against the impact of security related measures.

8. Elaborate concrete measures for the meaningful participation of women at all levels and ensure greater empowerment of women in the security, peace and human rights discourse, bearing in mind United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and subsequent resolutions.

9. Ensure adequate frameworks, mechanisms and tools for systemic and meaningful engagement of youth in security related policy and decision-making and in conflict prevention and resolution complementary to and in conformity with UNSCR 2250.

10. Support intercultural programmes for children and youth from a young age so as to nurture tolerance, cross-cultural understanding and mutual respect, bearing in mind that prevention of racism, xenophobia, intolerance (including religious intolerance) and violent extremism depends upon incentives for children and youth to follow the path to peace with a mindset and skills to shun violence and discrimination.

11. Build trust with civil society actors by respecting the space for human rights defenders, while protecting the rights of human rights defenders and civil society actors to advocate more effective promotion and protection of human rights at the interface with security concerns.

Mechanisms and personnel

12. Establish efficient and independent human rights oversight mechanisms, such as National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), National Prevention Mechanisms (NPMs), data protection authorities, parliamentarian oversight bodies, etc., while at the same time making sure that this does not negatively impact the important work of independent civil society actors (e.g. access to places of detention, information, etc.), and promote a culture based on human rights.

13. Build a culture of human rights in law enforcement and security related organizations and integrate human rights personnel/units in law enforcement and security related bodies so as to ensure sustained commitment to the complementarity between national security concerns and respect for human rights.

Resources

14. Ensure sustainable funding, make resources available and utilise these transparently, particularly by shifting from the military sector to the social sector so as to address the environment behind marginalisation, poverty, inequality and discrimination.

15. Promote national and international funding for civil society and research without restrictions, and provide funding for independent work in a transparent manner, without undue interference.

Information and monitoring

16. Undertake periodic human rights impact assessments in regard to the consequences of security measures, including on gender-based violence and other forms of violence and discrimination (interlinked with the right to digital privacy), with effective follow-up action in the pursuit of justice.

17. Collect and analyse evidence to understand how communities, vulnerable groups, in particular national minorities, experience insecurity and the impact of security measures, and to tailor human rights related communications accordingly.

18. Guarantee the right to information when personal data are collected, including on all aspects of the data processing, as well as on procedures for accessing own personal data stored, and to have inaccurate data corrected or deleted as laid down by law.

19. Adopt effective medium(s) for information dissemination, particularly ensuring a secure and enabling environment where women and vulnerable groups can exercise the right to information and access thereto.

Education and capacity building

20. Strengthen human rights education, training and capacity building, including curriculum development based on international standards bearing in mind local realities, targeted to a variety of groups, including law enforcers/security personnel and related actors as well as judiciary.

21. Support training and education on data protection and cybersecurity, particularly for children and youth from a young age, differentiating between age groups and their particular needs.

22. Build a bottom-up and top-down system of law enforcers and security personnel with effective screening, adequate training and education, performance monitoring, incentives for human rights sensitive implementation, and measures for accountability in the case of violations.

23. Establish human rights sensitive police "services" (rather than police forces) with human rights units and focal points so as to promote professionalisation and sustained commitment to comply with human rights standards.

24. Ensure and support initiatives to improve media literacy.

Accountability and remedies

25. Ensure procedural safeguards for suspects and persons accused in criminal proceedings.

26. Eliminate impunity for state agents who violate human rights, including by abolishing laws and/or eradicating policies that justify torture and other forms of ill-treatment, and ensure individual accountability.

27. Set up independent oversight bodies to investigate allegations against law enforcement and security personnel, with adequate resources and skills and without the requirement of prior authorisation before a state official can be prosecuted, operating transparently and publicising their proceedings and results.

28. Encourage the development of simplified procedures to access stored personal data and to have inaccurate data corrected or deleted as laid down by law.

Participation and inclusion

29. Broaden the space for civil society participation, ensuring space for gender responsiveness and the interests of minorities in the spirit of socioeconomic and cultural inclusion and democratic space for mobilisation and collective action.

30. Increase participation and inclusion of under-represented groups (including conflict-affected people).

31. Foster a rights-based and evidence-based discussion on security, refraining from criminalisation and stigmatisation of entire groups (e.g. refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), migrants, former combatants, conflict-affected children, etc.) and adequately responding to fears among the population including action to counter violent extremism (CVE).

32. Promote leadership from the local to the national and international levels that is respectful of pluralism and human diversity, as part of a local/global culture of non-violence and non-discrimination.

33. Centre policing strategies on community-based, human rights-oriented partnerships, balancing intelligence-led policing with community-based policing that is open and transparent, accountable, impartial, representative and effective in preventing and detecting crime.

34. Balance community-based policing and national security priorities with a view to creating trust between police and communities.

II. Recommendations to cities and local governments

35. Expand the network of human rights cities and local governments, bearing in mind the significant spread of urbanisation while not neglecting also the livelihood and protection of rural people. Invest in social and community work, also on public premises and in public space to promote urban competence and conflict resolution when dealing with marginalised population.

36. Ensure that urban security policies and programmes are based on a human rights approach, especially as emerging technologies such as special face recognition and intelligence software become available to police and local authorities.

37. Foster social inclusion and protection while implementing anti-discrimination and equality related measures effectively, and ensure that funding is not used for activities which may lead to incitement of hatred.

38. Encourage cities and local governments to adopt human rights education programmes, particularly addressing young people of different communities as part of action for cross-cultural understanding.

39. Implement effective communication strategies so as to prevent violence and discrimination, protect human rights effectively and ensure accountability of those responsible as well as providing remedies for victims and survivors of human rights violations.

40. Identify and/or establish independent institutions, such as local anti-discrimination offices to respond to human security, addressing local conflicts as well as to receive complaints with a view to redress.

41. Work with and promote active participation of civil society organizations and gender sensitive rights-based monitoring at the local level by means of civil society actors, including through appropriate and accessible technology to assist the work of local monitors.

III. Recommendations to the UN

42. Support the creation of early warning systems using the Human Rights Up Front Initiative, by taking into account social strategies in place and gender-based, religion and race sensitive indicators to address extremism and conflicts revival, complemented by adequate resourcing.

43. Support the UN Security Council and its committees to have consistent dialogue on human rights and to undertake human rights assessment of security-related resolutions, statements and action.

44. Urge the UN Human Rights Council through the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and special procedures, to strengthen the monitoring of human rights violations committed in the name of national security and the negative consequences of counter-terrorism and related actions, including through fact finding, with a view to providing adequate remedies.

45. Promote accession to human rights treaties and foster synergies between treaty body mechanisms.

46. Reaffirm commitment to and full application of the human rights-based approach in development cooperation, in particular in the fields of conflict prevention, peace and security and strengthen the monitoring of its application and ensure appropriate funding.

47. Call upon the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations to build the capacity of police, judicial and security sector with rule of law indicators leading to follow-up action.

48. Implement effectively the SDGs, particularly SDG 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels), which is cross-cutting for human rights and development, peace and security.

IV. Recommendations to regional organizations

49. Maintain and reinforce the increasing attention from some regional organizations such as the European Union (EU), the Council of Europe (CoE) and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to tackle the root causes behind terrorism and violent extremism as well as encroachments by securitisation and digitisation on the right to privacy, human rights and freedoms.

V. Recommendations to private corporate actors

50. Actively engage leadership in the business and technological sector as key partners in protecting human rights, and call upon digital corporate actors to respect the right to access the internet and the right to digital privacy.

51. Encourage digital actors to establish meaningful sector-wide self-regulation with independent multi-stakeholder bodies responsible for assessment and monitoring, with an appeals mechanism, an independent process and related criteria.

52. Ensure that "content moderation" staff are properly trained and resourced and that they have the necessary qualifications to review and determine whether content violates human rights.

53. Invest in research and in algorithms that respect and protect human rights and do not result in discriminatory profiling, and ensure compliance by increased scrutiny and oversight on how algorithms are built, by identifying biases in algorithms, by ensuring the quality of the data used and by increasing transparency in the use of algorithms.

54. Urge private corporate actors, especially those in the extractives industry, to adhere to international human rights standards and take measures to prevent and mitigate human rights abuses that could arise from their activities.

55. Call upon digital corporate actors to actively prevent the use and distribution of online child abuse and sexual exploitation materials on their platforms.

VI. Recommendations to the media

56. Strengthen public interest journalism, good governance in media and a public information system rooted in ethics and transparency.

57. Foster attachment inside journalism to core values — accuracy, independence, impartiality, humanity, transparency and accountability — eliminating hate-speech, building respect for pluralism, holding power bearers to account, and challenging abuse of human rights.

58. Ensure that media and journalism are trustworthy, intolerant of conflicts of interest, transparent about their work and always ready to listen to the complaints and views of others.

59. Strengthen self-regulation with independent oversight authorities to improve transparency, accountability and quality of journalism at all levels.

60. Improve solidarity and cooperation between journalists, media and human rights activists, for instance by pursuing the investigations initiated by eliminated journalists before they were murdered or imprisoned.

61. Develop and promote a human rights glossary for media workers, accessible in several languages, and provide guidelines for responsibility in framing narratives on terrorism and migration.

VII. Recommendations to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

62. In the relationship with increasingly digitised societies, broaden partnerships to promote human rights more effectively and in a gender sensitive manner. The partners include civic technology actors (who promote technology use for the common good) and communication experts from other fields, e.g. marketers, neuropsychologists.

63. Act as a watchdog of security policies and advocate the integration of CSOs in independent oversight bodies, including of the police, security forces, etc.

VIII. Recommendations to other entities

64. Call upon religious leaders to implement the Faith for Rights Declaration and Plan of Action and the Rabat Plan of Action in regard to action against incitement to hatred.

65. Encourage judges and the judicial sector more generally to question the legality of governments' security policies and interventions, on the basis of domestic or international law (namely, to turn away from the traditional "political doctrine" approach).

Working Group 1
Chairperson: Agnes Callamard
Rapporteur: Vitit Muntarbhorn
Team: Joana Daniel-Wrabetz and Philipp Wassermann
May 2018

WORKING GROUP 2: PROMOTION OF EQUALITY IN OUR SOCIETIES

The protection and promotion of equality has been a key element of efforts to achieve the implementation of human rights since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, and a focus on equality and non-discrimination was reinforced in the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme for Action.

Since then, major cultural, economic, political, social and other changes and challenges have occurred through the effects of, inter alia, globalisation, demographic developments, migration, climate change, and new communication technologies. Political decision-makers and other stakeholders continue to be confronted with inequalities as a persistent and growing phenomenon.

This Working Group discussed concepts, aspects and evolving concerns related to equality and how to address them through human rights compliant action. It proposed some measures to ensure that the human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination are integrated in responses to structural as well as emerging issues.

In this context, participants reviewed the role of global constituencies and new actors or those that are taking on new roles as duty-bearers for human rights protection and promotion, including local governments, notably cities, and private actors, notably businesses.

In keeping with the concept note for the expert conference, the discussion was guided, inter alia, by the following questions:

- What are the main reasons and factors for (in-)equality in our societies? What role do the global financial system, financial transfers and phenomena such as corruption play in aggravating inequalities? In which areas did we make substantial progress, and what can we learn from these examples? What is the contribution of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in this regard?
- Are the concepts of "equality/anti-/non-discrimination" and "vulnerability/positive discrimination" still helpful to counter inequalities in society or should we develop new approaches? Are there specific grounds of discrimination that we will have to examine more closely, such as age and inter-generational issues?
- How can we best integrate a human rights-based approach to poverty prevention and reduction policies?
- What do the Sustainable Development Goals mean on a local level and how can they be integrated in city strategies for sustainable urban development?
- What is the impact of new technologies, for instance on labour rights, and how can we address potentially negative consequences for equality?
- What are the benefits of an equal society for the general population? In what ways do we have to adapt our communication strategies to better pass the message about equality to all people? How can we reach out to people who feel disenfranchised by globalisation?

Summary of discussion and recommendations to policy makers and the human rights community:

1. Concept and approaches

It was noted that protection and promotion of equality in societies is a very broad topic, hence the starting point for the discussion was economic inequality, but it soon became clear that other aspects of inequality, such as civic, cultural, social and political, must be considered. While the alarming increase in economic inequality

over the last 25 years demanded particular attention from the human rights community, it was important to address how economic disparities intersect with social and cultural inequalities on grounds such as gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability and age, compounding discrimination and undermining substantive equality. In this context, it was considered important to also address intersectional forms of discrimination and furthermore the impact of climate change on equality.

While there has been significant progress in equality before the law since the 18th century, and more recently, progress has been made with protection from discrimination relating to prohibited grounds, such as sex/gender, race, ethnicity, disability, age, social status, religion, disability and others, these types of discrimination have neither been comprehensively and holistically addressed nor completely eliminated in any country.

It was recalled that Article 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966 requires action to protect people against discrimination by private actors and to ensure equal protection of the law. This principle is reinforced by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Where societies are becoming increasingly unequal in social, economic or other terms, this would imply that the state has a positive obligation to combat such rising inequalities and exclusion, ensuring no retrogression.

In the discussion on the concept of equality, it was noted that equality is considered as a cornerstone of the right to development, which was reaffirmed in 1993 with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. It was argued that the common provisions on equality and non-discrimination in the international human rights treaties implied that equality and non-discrimination as stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights had attained the status of customary international law. Equality and non-discrimination constitute also one of the six major principles contained in the human rights-based approach to development as recognised in the UN system's common understanding.

However, while it was recalled that the international human rights treaties, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UN Secretary-General are prioritising action against inequalities, there was concern that political and societal actors in many countries had lost sight of the value of equality, including as a public good, that the egalitarian focus of the state had been abandoned and the social contract had been delegitimised. Rising inequality has led to a lack of trust in others and in society whereas such trust had been the original idea of the social contract.

It was also suggested that actors were often addressing equality through specific, group-focused lenses that created the impression of equality being only about and for minorities whereas it should be a majority concern and an overarching societal goal.

Power and structural and institutional discrimination and inequality

Entrenched unfair, unequal and discriminatory institutional power structures were considered a fundamental concern, reflected, inter alia, in a lack of the right to participation in society, as well as of the rights to freedom of expression, information, association and assembly. At the same time, economic inequality cannot be separated from power. Addressing economic inequalities also requires looking at the fundamental power structures and considering which groups are and which groups are not able to fully participate in social and economic development and decision-making. While there is a need to focus on income inequality, simultaneously, there is an urgent need to address horizontal or status inequality amongst and between different groups. Access to equitable opportunities, for example, is frequently defined by existing social patterns of exclusion and prejudice (such as on grounds of race, gender, disability, age etc.), and therefore addressing structural and entrenched forms

of discrimination is also vital in promoting income equality. In fact, status equality is a precondition to achieving substantive economic equality.

The right to development and the notion of empowerment mean little if structural, institutional inequalities are perpetuated, and when related corruption impacts on development. Powerlessness, or a sense of powerlessness, is a major concern that needs to be addressed in the context of poverty alleviation policies.

While it was considered important to identify vulnerabilities to ascertain how they contribute to inequality and discrimination and to ensure that targeted action can be taken, the notion of "vulnerable groups" was seen as disempowering for some, such as women, and in some contexts, as potentially further victimising those who are already vulnerable. It was instead suggested to use language that does not equate a person with a given vulnerability and that ensures an appropriate focus on the existing agency of actors and their empowerment.

Recommendations

1. Build trust, refocus on and communicate equality as a goal for all of society, and re-legitimise and re-define the social contract.

2. Affirm states' obligations to eliminate inequality and discrimination as part of their human rights commitments.

3. Work towards expanding the concept of prohibited grounds for discrimination to include the increasing of inequality, and consider the latter as a non-permissible manifestation of retrogression of rights.

4. Ensure that policies and programmes that target inequalities contribute to empowerment and address entrenched, unsustainable, unfair and unequal power structures.

5. Use language such as "persons in situations of vulnerability" instead of "vulnerable groups", as appropriate in the given context.

II. Global trends and recent policy developments

Growing inequalities as human rights violations

Inequalities were considered as cause, catalyst as well as symptom of other human rights violations, and economic inequality as linked to many other types of inequalities and social tension, corruption, and radicalisation. It was highlighted that inequality is largely due to discriminatory legislation, policies and practices, and globalisation driven by neoliberalism.

Economic growth and equality

Economic growth may lead to reduction of poverty, which is an important goal. Some noted that there had been economic growth due to large scale poverty reduction in some countries and consequently inequalities between countries had been reduced. Yet, others highlighted lack of differentiation and a need to ensure disaggregation, and that by many accounts inequalities between countries were actually rising.

Another trend, on the other hand, is visible and concerning, namely growing inequalities within countries. In this respect, it was noted that a key issue in the last 30 years has been a major escalation in the gap between the rich and the poor, with unequal wealth concentration: 8 people own as much as 50% of the world's

population do, and the top 1% own more than all others.[1] While a new middle class had emerged in some countries, there was also a trend towards the decimation of the middle class in others. It was suggested that the gap escalation has been perpetuated by socioeconomic policies skewed towards protecting the rights of the few in the elites. Entrenched, institutionalised inequality continues to exist in economic structures. Economic growth alone does not decrease economic inequality if it is not matched by policies that support sustainable economic redistribution and social protection. As the example of some countries shows, high economic growth that benefits some parts of the population and not others may lead to significant increase in economic and social inequalities as well as continued lack of empowerment.

If inequality reaches a certain level, it leads to further human rights violations, with extreme economic inequality not just a cause but also a consequence. Drivers in this regard are transnational corporations and various groups of actors in the global economy where the recent proliferation of actors makes finding appropriate policies and programmes more challenging. Another driver is the global financial system with policy determinants such as fiscal austerity, freezes on public spending, and regressive tax reforms benefiting those who are already rich.

It was argued that some economic growth policies, through their focus on unsustainable large-scale development projects, had in fact increased the risk of or led to actual human rights violations, as manifested in evictions, land grabbing, forced migration, destruction of the natural environment, as well as torture and ill-treatment, extra-judicial executions, disappearances and arbitrary detention. This has led to new vulnerabilities and inequalities.

A major new UN/World Bank conflict prevention study, 'Pathways to Peace', concludes that exclusion and discrimination lead to conflict, and that political, economic, ethnic, or religious inequality fuels violence and populism. Some participants in the Working Group considered the effect of inequality "toxic" in the sense that inequality leads to exclusion that often finds its expression in violent, xenophobic, racist or populist movements. Populist governments play with, manipulate and exacerbate people's perceptions of discrimination, and these governments feed on inequality. A perception of disenfranchisement and inequality has been expressed in some democracies by groups who had previously been among the privileged and not significantly affected by inequalities. Far from being disenfranchised, this new group of the "poor" is however now playing a major role in politics and contributing to the trend towards marginalisation and further social, economic and political polarisation that would ultimately only deepen inequalities.

Recommendations

6. Recognise extreme economic inequality as the product of policies which entail multiple, serious violations of various human rights, including the right to equal protection of the law, and economic, social and cultural rights.

7. Analyse and address structural inequality and discrimination, including unequal access to power structures and decision-making, acknowledge its scale and recognise its impact.

8. Reaffirm that economic growth must be sustainably focused on contributing to equality and following a human rights-based approach with a focus on access to health, education, housing and other economic, social and cultural rights but also civil and political rights, including equal access to justice and political participation.

[1] Oxfam Briefing Paper (2017) An Economy for the 99%. https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/an-economy-for-the-99-its-time-to-build-a-human-economy-that-benefits-everyone-620170 [accessed 22.06.2018]

9. Undertake quality root cause analysis and research on grounds for inequality and exclusion and affected people who are or consider themselves to be treated unequally, to be disenfranchised and discriminated against, in order to better target policies aimed at rooting out stereotypes or societal norms supporting inequalities and discrimination.

10. Employ a human rights-based approach to climate change by respecting, protecting and fulfilling respective human rights obligations.

Gender equality, women's and girls' rights and the implementation gap

An equally concerning trend has been regression in gender equality since the millennium. There is an implementation gap in relation to equality overall, but notably gender equality: Where it exists in law, the formal right to equality and a gender equality-based policy approach are frequently not implemented in practice and often present greater challenges and resource requirements than overcoming the initial hurdles to create the legal or policy foundation in the first place. For individuals, especially for women, substantive equality is often not a reality, also due to internalised traditional approaches to gender equality where not only men, but also women are unaware of or indifferent to their right to equality, or have no space to claim and realise it.

Recommendations

11. Emphasise the universality of women's rights as an integral and indispensable part of all human rights.

12. Focus policies and programmes on effective promotion of women's and girls' right to equality, including through affirmative action.

Age-based discrimination and generational inequality

Young people and older persons face specific barriers in accessing their rights, specific human rights violations, and structural and institutional discrimination on the basis of their age. These are both a cause and a consequence of facing economic inequality, with youth or older persons being the age groups most at risk of poverty and social exclusion in many countries. This is also linked to power relations in society. While there has recently been a focus on the role of youth in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development or in discussions on peace and security policies, with youth recognised as peace builders, and on older persons through new international human rights mechanisms, the conceptual shift towards greater recognition of young people and older persons as rights-holders should be strengthened.

Recommendation

13. Recognise/focus on young people and older persons, and other groups more traditionally viewed as 'beneficiaries', as rights-holders and take steps to address their exclusion, discrimination and the barriers they face in accessing their rights.

New human rights developments and policy frameworks: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The most important development has been the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015 and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which are often described as strongly grounded in international human rights standards. The Working Group discussed the relationship between human rights and the SDGs almost three years after the adoption of the Agenda.

It was noted that the human rights community had achieved much in helping to align the 2030 Agenda and SDGs with human rights, notably through the expansion of previous goals or the introduction of new ones to encompass broader notions of equality/inequality and non-discrimination, such as SDG 5 on gender quality (broader than the pertinent former Millennium Development Goal 3) and the new SDGs 10 "Reduce inequality within and among countries" and 16 "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels". It was noted that the implementation of the SDGs may be used for strategic engagement with governments that reluctantly engage on human rights. SDG 10 in particular was considered an entry point for dialogue with those with whom, from a human rights perspective, dialogue might be less conducive. Yet SDG 10, the goal that tackles vested interests directly, experiences limited uptake by major political or development actors.

While the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs are the single most important development policy document of the current millennium so far and dominate as the defining benchmarks all development planning, policy dialogue, programming and financing bilaterally and multilaterally, at national, regional and international levels, it was recalled that they are a policy framework and thus "soft law", whereas the international human rights treaties are legally binding standards. Some participants were concerned that while the SDGs are more influenced by human rights principles than the Millennium Development Goals and offer entry points, the often vague formulation of targets and indicators does not sufficiently mirror the ambition of the goals or the universality of international human rights standards.

It was stressed that human rights offer to the SDGs a framework of binding legal obligations that does not exist as such in the 2030 Agenda, and human rights standards on non-discrimination and substantive equality provide a detailed normative framework to guide implementation of the cross-cutting SDG commitments to "reduce inequality within and between countries" and to "leave no one behind". At the same time, it was pointed out that it is important to use clear human rights language in a principled approach, and to not replace human rights language with development/SDG-related language. It was also recalled that follow-up to outcomes/recommendations of the international human rights mechanisms should be pursued as an equal and integrated priority of the national development agenda.

Recommendations

14. Use the 2030 Agenda, the implementation of the SDGs and the commitment to "leave no one behind" as an entry point for discussions with governments on human rights principles and standards, in view of states' commitment to Agenda 2030 in support of the implementation of human rights. Concretely, base each goal and target of the 2030 development agenda on related human rights, and link SDG indicators to human rights indicators.

15. Use SDGs, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and other development-related frameworks as a vehicle for human rights accountability, not just development accountability, including through the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) and new Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs).

16. Seize the opportunity for a review of the status of national, regional and global inequalities in the context of Goals 8 (decent work and economic growth), 10 (reduced inequality within and among countries) and 16 (peaceful and inclusive societies), being considered during the next VNR in 2019, and bring in elements of Goal 5 (gender equality).

17. While framing the action in support of SDG implementation as based on human rights and the "leave no one behind" principle, ensure that clear human rights language is used to illustrate principles, norms and standards.

18. While emphasising that equality and non-discrimination are cross-cutting objectives in the SDG framework, emphasise the key role played by peaceful and inclusive societies in support of all other goals and advocate for annual review of SDG 16 at each VNR as of 2020, when VNR practice will be reviewed.

19. Integrate Universal Periodic Review (UPR), Treaty Body and Special Procedures recommendations into SDG planning, implementation and monitoring, including any national SDG action plans, UN (Sustainable) Development Assistance Frameworks, VNRs and other such processes at national, regional and international levels.

III. Holistic, comprehensive policies and programmes based and focused on human rights protection and promotion

Good governance, social protection, fair labour policies

It was suggested that committing to a new agenda for achieving equality rooted in human rights requires, at national and, where applicable, regional and global levels, good governance and fair social policies, labour standards, social protection floors with guaranteed access to health, education, housing and other social services. These can be the skeleton of the framework for a new human rights-focused agenda to tackle inequalities, which features reforms of social, economic/financial and where necessary political systems, and redistribution to overcome inequalities. Good practices were seen in some countries in social spending, labour protection, social protection, and increasing progressive taxation. Other good practices were seen in the human rights-based approach to social protection developed by the former Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty.

Recommendations:

20. Support policies and programmes aligned with human rights standards that challenge discriminatory, asymmetric power relations, empower disadvantaged and discriminated people and groups and encourage redistributive justice and wealth/economic benefit redistribution, including through fiscal and taxation policies.

21. Ensure good governance and the rule of law, eliminate corruption in government and the economy, and ensure transparency in procurement and other public processes.

22. Ensure fair social and labour market policies focused on elimination of inequalities and discrimination.

23. Adopt and reinforce social protection programmes to fulfil the right to social security and to an adequate standard of living for all, without discrimination, in line with recent international commitments to ensure social protection floors.

24. Ensure that labour market policies are aimed at fulfilling the right to decent work, ensuring rights of freedom of association and to collective bargaining, implementing wage protections and ensuring stringent labour standards in the workplace, addressing wages and labour conditions in the informal as well as formal sector.

25. Ensure that policies and programmes are gender-sensitive and, for instance, consider women's disproportionate unpaid care work in the home and community. Create temporary special measures for women as necessary, e.g. to reduce the gender pay gap, reach women's equal participation in political decision-making, shore up social protection for the many women in the informal economy.

Participation, civic space and human rights defenders

Participation is a vital element of equality. Studies have shown that many poor, rural, illiterate people measure poverty and equality not primarily by economic indicators for the affected persons, but that people describe themselves as poor because they lack participation and voice.

In recent years, many laws and policies have been adopted and action taken to constrain civil society and more broadly, civic space — ranging from laws directly suppressing freedoms of expression, assembly, association, information and participation to laws that affect the economic livelihoods of organizations and individuals. An even more concerning trend shows in serious human rights violations in a growing number of countries, consisting of alleged extrajudicial executions, disappearances and arbitrary arrests, accompanied by a climate of fear and impunity of the security forces who were mostly behind those developments.

It was noted that there are major challenges in the way in which SDG processes have so far been implemented. There has been a lack of inclusive and transparent national processes. Gap analyses and human rights impact assessments must be taken into consideration. There have also been long-standing concerns relating to challenges due to lack of participation in programmes by the International Financial Institutions (World Bank and International Monetary Fund) and regional institutions (e.g. the Asian Development Bank) as well as by the UN. Programmes relating to the principle of free, prior and informed consent, especially by indigenous communities, must be strengthened and relaunched. New grievance and complaints mechanisms introduced over the past years by the UN should be used.

Recommendations

26. Ensure support for the role of, and support to, civil society as critical actors in addressing inequalities, notably human rights defenders, including development actors and environmental defenders.

27. Provide strong protection measures for human rights defenders, especially against serious human rights violations such as extrajudicial executions, disappearances, arbitrary arrests, torture and harassment.

28. Ensure regular, increased inclusion of and support to civil society in national SDG planning, monitoring and implementation processes to ensure an equality focus and better monitoring.

29. Ensure the application of the United Nations "Declaration on the right of individuals, groups of power in society to promote and protect universally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms" of December 9, 1998, commonly known as the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (HRDs), and related guidelines of the UN, EU and other organizations. Use the 20th anniversary of the Declaration to highlight the important role of HRDs in contributing to equality.

Education

It was noted that equality was severely curtailed for 800 million illiterate adults, two thirds of whom are women. This ratio has remained unchanged for the last 20 years.[2] Education and skills levels are closely related to inequality, thus it is essential to invest in education at all levels. In the context of technical and vocational education and new technological developments, demands are created for different skill sets and should be anticipated to ensure that no one is left behind in the future.

[2] United Nations Statistics Division (2015): The World's Women. https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/chapter3/chapter3.html [accessed 22.06.2018]

Industries that are moving towards improved technology can be incentivised and/or required to develop skills.

Recommendations

30. Pursue relevant, quality and equitable education policies, focusing in particular on delivering outcomes for women. Education should focus first and foremost on personal development and supporting active participation in society, while also supporting learners in preparing for new emerging labour markets and the changing nature of work.

31. Make human rights education available for everyone in society, not just in universities, to empower people as rights-holders to understand and claim their human rights, and states as duty-bearers to protect rights and address the impact of inequalities.

32. Ensure that political leadership communicates the value of equality and inclusive participation, and continuously targets human rights education at officials and their contractors who are responsible for providing public services.

33. Ensure human rights education for women and girls in particular, and adapt tools, including new textbooks that highlight equality. Arguments for education for women can be made on the basis of local religious and cultural concepts (e.g. education is a right in Islam); in order to achieve this, language needs to be culturally sensitive while upholding universal human rights principles.

Youth and age discrimination

The impact of economic inequalities on youth is a major issue. Public austerity policies do not favour young people, and young people are also disproportionately impacted by austerity measures, leading to their being at greatest risk of poverty and social exclusion. This is both a cause and a consequence of young people facing barriers in accessing their rights on the basis of their age. Young people face violations of their right to fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value: in nine European countries, there are youth minimum wages that are lower than the standard minimum wage. Young people face barriers in accessing their right to work and their right to just and favourable conditions of work: youth unemployment levels are more than double the general unemployment rate in many countries and young people are overrepresented in non-standard and precarious forms of work. Young people face age-based barriers for accessing social protection, a violation of their right to social security. Access to affordable housing is curtailed, and there is political and civil rights discrimination due to laws regulating minimum age requirements for running for office at 25 or becoming president at 40. Minimum age requirements for running for parliamentary office that are higher than the voting age are present in a majority of countries around the world. Young persons with disabilities, young women, young people from ethnic minorities etc. are encountering multiple and intersecting discriminations.

Recommendation

34. Ensure a focus on young people, their access to rights and their empowerment in all policies and programming, in support of equality.

Sports

It was suggested that diverse and innovative tools and mechanisms should be used to promote equality and human rights in general. One of these tools could be sports as a way to foster inclusion, establish and broaden social networks across

different classes and groups, teach values, fundamental rights such as fairness and freedom, and empower women and youth.

Recommendation

35. Use sports as an effective means of promoting fundamental norms and values such as fairness, equality, respect, responsibility and non-discrimination.

New technologies

It was noted that the approach to tackling inequality and discrimination has shifted to expand to issues such as new technologies, both as opportunities and as threats to equality. There is digital exclusion and inequality due to a divide between parts of the world having access to digital technologies and the other parts lacking this access.

New types of discrimination, such as "algorithmic" discrimination by Artificial Intelligence (AI) was noted, e.g. an algorithm used by US courts to predict recidivism likelihood was found to discriminate against black offenders. It is predicted that AI will replace humans in the labour market and take over many jobs, not just manual labour or work in factories, but clerical workers, lawyers, drivers, telemarketers, financial analysts, and even those in the medical profession. In one US study, it has been estimated that 47 percent of currently existing jobs are at high risk of potential automation in the coming decades.[3] This would leave more of the middle class unemployed and struggling to adjust, hence furthering the income gap.

Blockchain technology as a new megatrend appears to strongly impact society and global economy over the next decade, which bears the risk of inequality in growth but also carrying the chance to promote equality.

Recommendations

36. Ensure a focus on the negative and positive impact of new technologies and related policies and legislation: Consider anti-discrimination legislation and policies on data protection and the right to information together, creating equal protection by design.

37. Ensure that Artificial Intelligence plays a supportive role to humans, by empowering them to perform better in handling complex and critical situations which require judgement and creative thinking that supports equality and non-discrimination.

38. Prevent and address negative consequences, e.g. by feeding machines with 'fair' data to prevent algorithmic bias.

39. Monitor developments in Blockchain technology and regulate to increase equality and prevent discrimination; ensure that the technology creates more transparency while reducing fraud and corruption.

40. Prepare people equally for automation and for new roles with a focus on science and technology, through education and training in these areas and through research on the labour market and workforce needs so that no one is left behind.

Human rights and business

Increasing accountability of corporations and implementation of human rights principles by businesses were considered a key strategy for tackling inequalities. Reference was made to paragraph 67 of the 2030 Agenda that noted private businesses as key drivers of inclusive economic growth, and to the Declaration of the G20 in

[3] Frey/Osborne (2013): The future of employment. https://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/downloads/academic/future-of-employment.pdf [accessed 22.06.2018]

2017, which committed to achieving sustainable and inclusive supply chains, by fostering the implementation of labour, social and environmental standards and human rights in line with internationally recognised frameworks, such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy. It was noted that states had committed to working towards establishing adequate policy frameworks such as National Action Plans on business and human rights and to underline the responsibility of businesses to exercise due diligence. states also committed to taking immediate and effective measures to eliminate child labour by 2025, forced labour, human trafficking and all forms of modern slavery.

Recommendations

41. Ensure adoption and implementation of National Action Plans on business and human rights along with effective grievance and reparation mechanisms.

42. Support and speed up the elaboration of a binding legal treaty on business and human rights.

43. Include human rights clauses in all investment treaties, with focus on extraterritorial human rights obligations.

44. Promote the application of the principle of free, prior and informed consent, especially where investment and development concerns affected indigenous people.

National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs)

The crucial role of National Human Rights Institutions, notably independent NHRIs, was highlighted, such as their function to promote equality and prevent and protect from discrimination. The Working Group noted their indispensable protection functions; their support to people exposed to discrimination and intolerance and their roles to pursue litigation on their behalf; also the function, where applicable, to take decisions on complaints, including on issues relating to the violation of equality principles and the right to non-discrimination. NHRIs are key institutions in charge of monitoring and key partners holding governments to account. They link national, regional and international actors. They also provide platforms for people to engage on human rights through their action on promotion and through human rights education.

Recommendations

45. Support independent National Human Rights Institutions that are adequately resourced and have a comprehensive mandate in compliance with the Paris Principles.

46. Strengthen the role of NHRIs in addressing discrimination and inequalities, reviewing the scope of progressive realisation of economic, social and cultural rights, and developing SDG indicators and monitoring compliance.

Role of cities and municipalities

Cities and municipalities were considered new and increasingly important human rights actors. In 30 years, 70% of the world's population will live in cities.[4] Depending on their actions, urbanisation can be a positive or negative force for equality. The functions of municipalities/cities were described as serving as a democratic institution, rule maker, employer, service provider and contractor. Good practice is a toolkit for equality at local level, developed by the UNESCO-founded

[4] United Nations (2016), New Urban Agenda, A/RES/71/256, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Quito, Ecuador, on 20 October 2016, p. 3.

International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities (ICCAR) in cooperation with the Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at Local and Regional Level in Graz. This tool supports the implementation of the 2016 UN New Urban Agenda (NUA) in practice. The NUA has set the scene for sustainable urban development. 39 policies in 35 cities in 13 countries had been assessed in preparation of the toolkit, and among the most important findings are that policies are applied to promote equal opportunities rather than fighting discrimination. It was found that high-level leadership, commitment, ownership and engagement was key, with clear objectives, the participation of stakeholders and programmes lasting for several years. Diversity and integration policies such as action plans, welcome services, counselling, and anti-discrimination offices were successful if they were matched with relevant budgets for at least five years (short-term, pilot projects did not have such impact). Most successful, but rarely employed, are policies of cities as contractors and employers against discrimination over the longer term. Clear responsibilities and concrete objectives in policies were leading to concrete results. It was noted that cities/municipalities have both significant opportunities and responsibilities to ensure equal opportunities for all where people can live in security, peace and dignity.

Recommendations:

47. In efforts to expand from global to new local constituencies for human rights, recognise the important roles and responsibilities of local authorities and cities as service providers for leaving no one behind and ensuring a human rights-based approach.

48. Use an urban focus (on SDG 11 'Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable' and the New Urban Agenda) in policies to strengthen equality at the local level, leaving no one behind through promotion of substantive equality, equal treatment, equal opportunities, inclusion and equity.

49. Use employment policies to ensure non-discrimination and promotion of equality by employers in their city workforce and use public procurement policies to ensure non-discrimination and to prevent corruption in the private sector.

50. Plan and implement municipal equality/non-discrimination policies, operationalisation of the "leave no one behind" principle in anti-discrimination policies, with full participation of concerned people.

51. Guarantee security of tenure and recognise the social functions of housing, land and property in laws and policies (e.g. city of Vienna as good example/tradition of social housing policies).

52. Monitor local policies for impact on the persons most affected, not just for management compliance.

Monitoring and data

It was suggested that the development of improved systems for data for evidence-based policy making and programming was key to tackling inequalities. The reach of data disaggregation was to be extended, as people excluded are migrants, people in remote rural areas, nomads etc. National statistical systems/offices are natural partners for monitoring and the related data collection, analysis and use, in particular where joined up with National Human Rights Institutions.

Recommendations:

53. Focus on implementation and monitoring of inequality and non-discrimination, with robust data generation, disaggregation, analysis and dissemination supporting evidence-based policies and programming.

54. Link statistical offices and NHRIs in programming and SDG implementation monitoring, with a focus on those being most left behind and discriminated against.

Communications and advocacy

How to make equality issues relevant to everyone in society was considered a key issue. It was suggested that it is important to seek ways of reaching out to those who feel left behind or excluded by a political culture that they see as privileging marginal groups, as well as using human rights education to empower people who might feel unable to claim their rights as a result of structural or cultural barriers. It was concluded that, in parallel, emotional and rational advocacy and communication should be employed, using hard data and facts for evidence-based communication, but also real life, human stories to reach those who respond better to personal experience. Human rights education programmes could use examples from history to allow people to develop their own critical perspectives on both the historical roots of present-day inequality and the past struggles for equality that resulted in the human rights norms of today.

Recommendations

55. Engage people who might feel alienated from human rights by using perspectives from history to show how struggles for equality emerged in response to injustice, inequality, and violence in the past.

56. Use an interdisciplinary approach in communications to show that human rights are not abstract, but very real and meaningful to people, and the result of historical struggles in particular local contexts.

IV. Taking the new human rights and equality agenda to the economic and development decision-making sphere

In taking the new human rights and equality agenda to the economic and development decision-making sphere of accountability, considered by some so far a largely "human rights free zone", the following could be considered.

It was concluded that governments and international financial institutions should take steps to improve the regulation and monitoring of national fiscal policies and global financial markets and institutions, to address the role financial deregulation and liberalisation has played in increasing income and wealth disparities, and in contributing to financial crises with severe implications for human rights.

Recommendations

57. Adopt policies that seek to place austerity measures within a human rights framework, halting fiscal austerity action that contravenes human rights to protect from retrogression. Ensure that fiscal policies guarantee basic social protection floors, in particular basic education and health.

58. The European Union and other regional groupings should reconsider and amend neoliberal policies.

59. The International Financial Institutions (IFIs) should ensure a human rights-based approach to poverty reduction strategies and a greater focus on longer-term processes of empowerment of stakeholders.

60. IFIs should strengthen social and economic impact assessments that significantly increase human rights integration and make them mandatory; they should ensure transparency and complaint mechanisms for stakeholders. Review trade laws and make them subsidiary to human rights law.

61. Reinforce and support the application of the concept of maximum available resources (to be used by states for the realisation of economic, social and cultural rights) and link policies to it, and support their financing through progressive and equitable tax policies aimed at generating the maximum available resources to reduce income and wealth disparities.

62. Ensure spending policies enable the universal and progressive realisation of all human rights without discrimination or retrogression.

63. Address the global economic order through socially redistributive tax systems, tax abuse being incompatible with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), e.g. policies capable of transforming wealth distribution such as land reform, improved access to further education and training, and policies aimed at addressing employment vulnerabilities (by reducing potential exploitation, and strengthening labour protection).

64. Eradicate illicit financial transfers as a source of inequalities by taking individual and collective action to eliminate tax abuse that increases inequalities within and between countries.

Special recommendations to the UN

65. Ensure One UN action with human rights as a central part of its mandate, in political affairs, development, peace and security, conflict prevention, humanitarian affairs and other. Fully apply UN Development Group (UNDG), Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and other guidance to this effect, including the human rights-based approach to development.

66. Implement the agreed Shared UN System Framework for Action on inequality developed by the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and its specific areas of action in policies and programming, with implementation and operationalisation having full support from Member States.

67. Continue playing a leadership role in ensuring application of practical measures for equality and non-discrimination; e.g. newly attained gender equality among resident coordinators is a good example.

Working Group 2
Chairperson: Manfred Nowak
Rapporteur: Heike Alefsen
Team: Anna-Maria Steiner, Nina Radovic
May 2018

Annex

Vienna + 25: Building Trust — Making Human Rights a Reality for All

International Expert Conference on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the World Conference on Human Rights

organized by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights (BIM) at the invitation of the City of Vienna

Vienna City Hall, Austria
22 and 23 May 2018

Programme

Tuesday, 22 May 2018

12:00 Registration and welcome lunch

13:30 High-level opening session

Opening Addresses:

- **Michael Häupl**, Mayor and Governor of Vienna
- **Karin Kneissl**, Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, Republic of Austria
- **Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein**, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Opening Panel Discussion: Emerging human rights challenges — Perspectives from the ground

- **Michael O'Flaherty**, Director of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (Chair)
- **Nadia Murad**, UNODC Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking, Iraq
- **Max Schrems**, Data protection activist and founder of NOYB — European Center for Digital Rights, Austria
- **Hauwa Ibrahim**, Human rights lawyer, Nigeria
- **Susana Chiarotti**, Human rights lawyer and women's rights activist, Argentina

15:00 Parallel Working Groups

1. Human Rights and Security
2. Promotion of equality in our societies

16:00 Coffee Break

16:30 Parallel Working Groups (continued)

19:00 Reception for Panelists and Working Group participants at the Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs

Wednesday, 23 May 2018

09:00 Parallel Working Groups (continued)

11:00 Coffee Break

11:30 Concluding Session

Presentation of Recommendations from the Working Groups

Concluding Panel Discussion: The way forward — Views of key institutional stakeholders

- **Christian Strohal**, Special Representative for the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights 1993 (Chair)
- **Fabrizio Hochschild**, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination
- **Hilal Elver**, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food
- **Bandana Rana**, Member of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women CEDAW
- **Diego García-Sayán**, UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers
- **Gauri Van Gulik**, Amnesty International Regional Director for Europe

Concluding Remarks:

- **Karin Kneissl**, Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, Republic of Austria

13:00 End of the Conference

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13 30 *Policy Lab on Human Rights Cities organized by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights in cooperation with the City of Vienna*